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ABSTRACT

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# Central Statistical Libraries in Europe.

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## Abstract

The paper tries to clarify the position special governmental libraries hold in the system of libraries of today by investigating only one specific type of library mainly from a formal and historical point of view.

Central statistical libraries in Europe were first regarded as administrative and archival libraries. Their early holdings of foreign publications in applied statistics, resulting from direct international exchange agreements and exceeding in percentage quite often the stocks of statistical publications of their own country, made them to a certain extent the forerunners of today's much more comprehensive independent libraries of social sciences.

The need to cope with the specific acceleration in the growth of stocks, with the continuous change statistics undergo and with the growing tendency towards a concentration on the most recent data only, will change the library character to that of a documentation centre in the near future.

# Central Statistical Libraries in Europe

The intention of this paper is to contribute to the efforts to clarify the position special governmental libraries hold in the system of libraries of today by describing the history, character and functions of one specific type only.

## 1. Definition:

In this paper are not considered as central statistical libraries:

a) those of economic or social sciences on a national or an international level, though all of them contain and have to contain substantial funds of statistical publications as for instance the United Nations Library in Geneva "including Europe's most comprehensive collections of statistical publications", the British Library of Political and Economic Science, London, the Fundamental Library of Social Sciences, Moscow, or the Bibliothek des Instituts für Weltwirtschaft, Kiel.

b) Neither will be reviewed the role of independent libraries, sometimes even called "statistical laboratories" in pure or in management science, in market or in opinion research, essential as they may be by their capacity to provide a wide range of data and of methods how to obtain them, for the interested public in a highly industrialized society.

c) Nor is it intended to present here the specific character and functions of libraries of university institutes of statistics in Europe, such as in Oxford and Cambridge, Paris and Munich, whose analytically processed collections update and surpass by far the corresponding material, sometimes neglected, in the central university libraries, because of their specific cataloguing problems.

Nevertheless should be mentioned in this connection the collections of literature of various statistical associations in Europe, as for instance the Société de Statistique de Paris and the Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Statistik und Volkswirtschaft, because of their reputation of long standing in the European world of learning in the past century. All of them seem to have been merged at different dates and sometimes repeatedly with other statistical libraries of their respective countries with the exception of the library owned by the Royal Statistical Society in London, dating back to 1834.

d) And only occasionally major libraries or regional of municipal statistical authorities will have to be mentioned, at least as far as they, just like the statistical libraries mentioned under c), are not without relations to what in this paper will be considered as "central statistical libraries".

The libraries herewith under consideration will be limited to those which came into existence and/are mainly functioning as libraries serving the central statistical agency of their respective governments. The main task of a central statistical agency has always been to conduct census enumerations concerning population, manufacturing and agriculture, and to register currently commercial, economic and social data for the purposes of the state. And with this attempt at a definition the problems begin.

2. Scope and varieties:

In Great Britain, Europe's most statistics minded country, from where have issued so many decisive impulses for the development of statistical method and organization, there does not exist a central statistical agency, but rather a completely decentralized statistical service. We should have to take into consideration the various holdings of the Board of Trade Library as well as those of the Library of the General Register, the Customs and Excise, the former Commonwealth Office and many other departmental libraries instead, whereas the Central Statistical Office in London, operating since 1940 as a coordinating centre for all official statistical activities, does not claim an essential library of its own.

Decentralization of statistical services is likewise known for instance in Scandinavian countries, where the central statistical offices for a long time were restricted to population and agricultural statistics and thereby affected the character of their libraries in a still very noticeable way.

In Switzerland and Germany the decentralization of governmental statistical activities has by tradition always been more on the regional than on the subject side and influenced the substance of the respective central statistical libraries accordingly, in contrast to those pertaining to the individual territory, which were orientated more towards regional planning and geography. In a way, they supplement each other. This can be observed in particular in the relation between the library of the Bavarian Statistical Office with its rich old holdings, uninter-

rupted for a century, and the library of the German Federal Statistical Office, founded in 1949.

In France, after a long period of dividing official statistical activities among several government boards, a somewhat regional decentralized statistical system just turned out after the Second World War. The regional agencies have not yet developed libraries while the development of the central statistical library underwent into decisive changes by incorporating of various origin to meet the extensive research activities of institutes, since 1951 aggregated to change the Statistique générale de la France into the "Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques".

The character of a library can also be deeply affected, if the Central Statistical Office acts at the same time as training centre for statisticians or as National Planning Agency, where literature on the latest planning methods and results has to have absolute superiority in comparison to older funds.

So, it seems that under the term "central statistical libraries" we have to deal in reality with a range of libraries of different structure and functions. Therefore a few historical outlines must be given. And even these outlines are hard to fix.

While statistics are much in the centre of public interest, it is rather seldom, perhaps just in the wake of some official anniversary, that the history and function of the library attached to the statistical service in question is adequately mentioned. And with the only exception of my distinguished colleagues, Dr. Irena Morsztynkiewicz, Poland, and Mr. K.A. Mallaber, United Kingdom, nobody up to now seems to have gone to the trouble to occupy himself with a comparative survey of these special governmental libraries, where during the last hundred years a unique wealth of data from all kinds of statistics - official and non-official ones - is constantly collected and kept in readiness for all potential users.

So, this paper is nothing but another attempt, the author demanding urgently additions and corrections in all parts and asking for indulgence because of the strongly felt lack of thorough and allround information, especially as far as Eastern Europe is concerned.

## 3. Historical outlines:

When and how did central statistical libraries come into existence?

This means, of course, first to ask for the year of foundation of the respective national statistical offices in Europe. And so it has to be recalled somewhat rapidly, that, with Britain's dispersed but lively official statistical activity well ahead, France, Austria and former Prussia for instance established some kind of national statistical agency in the first years of 1800, but permanent government bodies of that kind did not make their official appearance before 1830, headed by Belgium (1831) and followed by Bavaria and Denmark, while Russia, Switzerland, Hungary and Italy set up their first central statistical services around 1860, followed by Spain and the former German Reich. The Netherlands entered the scene at the end of the past century, Greece in 1911, Poland and Czechoslovakia after the First World War. As much as libraries of the oldest statistical offices may feel inclined to identify their birth-day with that of their office, there are often essential differences to be found on further consideration, depending on the varying conditions under which they come into existence.

## 4. Structural peculiarities:

### a) The administrative element:

Wherever the statistical agency has over a longer period been considered as part of a more comprehensive Department (mostly of the Interior), the library is most likely to be hampered in its individual development into a special library. In former Prussia, in Austria and Bavaria for instance this development took more than half a century. The initial holdings consist mainly of periodicals, gazettes and parliamentary papers, not very different from those of any unspecific administrative library. Sometimes a regional statistical library may also be re-incorporated into a general administrative library at a much later date.

And as even the most independent national statistical office of today cannot do without this kind of literature and documents, central statistical libraries always have to consider to a certain extent in their accessions politics the necessities of general administration, incongruous as thes often soon outdated holdings may seem to a stream-line minded special librarian.

So, central statistical libraries may emerge from duplicates of general departmental stocks and keep this streak forever in their structure, usually deepened by the fact that even within their proper agency they are considered as part of the administrative service and do not, with the exception of France, form a division of its own, responsible only to the Director-General.

b) The archival element:

For other statistical libraries and for some of the oldest among them, which for administrative reasons have been integrated into later collections since, it can be assumed, that official data collections and compilations of statesmen, physiocrats and their learned successors have been at their roots.

So, since the 18th century, and as a result of the individual turns taken by a gradually developing national statistical system, some may have started as mere census archives and this to an extent that even today a few libraries include the final tabulations of the first national population censuses, while others originating from official economics archives managed to guard up to now records of national foreign trade statistics or voluminous tables showing the manifold attempts to draw from taxation lists the outlines of the first national accounts.

The best known examples are given by two very distinguished statistical libraries, at the same time to be considered as representatives of two completely different types of their kind: the documentation service of the Swedish Statistiska Centralbyrån, where is cherished the "Tabellverket 1749" of the famous "Svenska Tabellkommissionen" together with the originals of the earliest census records of most Stockholm parishes, and the Customs and Excise Library in London, with collections of economic maritime history dating back to the 17th century. Unpublished summary tabulations from the early 19th century are also still kept by the Institut National de Statistique in Brussels.

To place unpublished data collections from various official sources under the charge of one's library has since become a widely spread habit among statistical offices. While they are often welcome and sometimes even necessary supplements to earlier as well as to the most recent statistical publications, they may also be a source of

problems to the librarian. If these tabulations provide detailed breakdowns of recent data, it will always be difficult to decide if and how to catalogue them, where to keep them and how to limit their use in accordance with the strict regulations concerning their confidentiality. This brings the statistical librarian quite often in contact with modern archival questions.

And whenever his post in accordance with administrative practice is regarded as that of the office's historian, he will also be charged with the care for the dead files of historical value, as for instance in Hungary and Germany.

More difficulties are due to arise if the librarian, as recently in Sweden, France and Germany, is made responsible too for the preliminary guardianship over the thousands of tons of processed primary material from official statistics (questionnaires, punchcards, intermediate tabulatings, etc.) if he has to develop disposal schedules and to supervise their execution. Fortunately, the perpetual shifting of substance taking place within the masses of such material prevents effectively any incorporation into the library, but furthers generally a strong tendency to split into various documentation units, definitely separated from the library proper. Since the introduction of magnetic tape, data archives may again be considered as complementary to the holdings of a statistical library.

## 5. The statistical library:

### a) Contributive factors:

What has to be regarded as the essential nucleus of any central statistical library are published applied statistics in contrast to the preference given to literature on statistical theory by academical statistical institutes, and on the evaluation of statistical data by social science research institutes. These publications mainly come from three different sources:

aa) In the years immediately following the foundation of a statistical office whose own publication activity often needs a long start, administrative statistics published before by other governmental bodies are taken over, of course, but private donations are preponderant. The more so, as frequently private societies consisting of a country's outstanding scholars in statistics served as predecessors to the final government institution. This goes for

Great Britain and France as well as for Austria, Switzerland and Hungary, the Netherlands providing a late, but perhaps the most striking example, because the Netherland's Statistical Society, founded in 1856, ceased to exist after having succeeded in persuading the Dutch government to establish a permanent special authority, functioning since 1899 as Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek in The Hague. Naturally, the society's considerable collection of statistical literature was taken over by the newly created Bureau, including its own important publication series.

In most European countries statistical associations continued working side by side with the national statistical service, establishing or re-establishing themselves at a later date (Société Belge de Statistique, Deutsche Statistische Gesellschaft, Vereniging voor de Statistiek in the Netherlands, Jugoslovensko Statisticko Drustvo) to supplement governmental statistical activities, sometimes on a specific level, regional or municipal (for instance Verband Deutscher Städtestatistiker) or on specific subjects, such as geography, econometrics, mathematics or demography (for instance Società Italiana de Economia, Demografia e Statistica). Whether the frequent cases of personal union in the leading posts led to a temporary liaison or even a permanent merging of private and official organisation, the profit of such a cooperation was always strongly felt by the library. Because, in the long run, continuous close contacts between national statistical agency and interested learned societies did much to develop two of the categories in which Europe's central statistical libraries excel: firstly the unique wealth of national data drawn from various sources and usually including neighbouring territories as well as evaluation and interpretation of these figures; and secondly a generally good selection of literature on statistical methods, kept up to date much more by the societies' own publications and by the influx of reviewers' copies than by purchases wrung from the fascinatingly tiny budget conceded to governmental statistical libraries.

bb) The growth rate and completeness of national data collections depends also upon the publication activity of the statistical services whose libraries serve as a natural depository, in some cases abused as sales section, but mostly to provide sufficient archival and exchange copies. Because the continuous exchange of

their own publications has always been considered as one of the simplest and most efficient ways to channel mutually needed information between a government's agencies. Not to be in a position to participate adequately and personally in this direct exchange of publications is one of the typical starting difficulties any governmental librarian has to deal with. But if the library is given the chance to cooperate with the publication section, the statistical librarian with an adequate statistical training may find himself sometimes even editor of the more general statistics, as for instance in Spain and Sweden. But in any case he will be an indispensable partner within the office's general information service, because of the riches in documents entering his precincts.

For a statistical library is also consulted to a considerable extent because of the office's own publications. They are supposed to be found there complete, easily at hand and most suitably prepared for the user. This is of course one of the library's outstanding tasks. But changes and ruptures in administration, so frequent in European countries, are a constant danger to the preservation of more than one complete set of the office's own publications over a longer period. And the enormous acceleration of printing activity in statistics in recent years mounting to an average output of six to eight publications per day by one national statistical agency alone, can make this principal duty of a statistical librarian a very thorny one, even if permanent co-operation with the editor guarantees a certain consideration of publication standards, as far as the necessary bibliographical indications are concerned, which, unfortunately, is not always the case.

cc) What European statistical libraries usually are most proud of, are their collections of foreign statistical publications. These are obtained thanks to an informal <u>international exchange</u> arrangement dating back to 1853, when statisticians met in Brussels at their first international conference to exchange their knowledge and experience. Amongst many private scholars from 26 European countries were counted of course also the representatives of the newly established statistical organizations. Stipulated by the eminent Belgian statistician Adolphe Quetelet, it was agreed to establish

a current exchange of statistical publications and so to acchieve gradually an international comparability in official statistics.

The impulse given by this exchange agreement was felt immediately and has been felt ever since. It has stimulated publication activities in countries where statistics hitherto had been treated as secret state affairs. It has promulgated statistical methods and expanded the field of their application considerably. International exchange of publications was a necessity for the development of statistics as a science at that time and its value can hardly be underestimated. It also gave the few modest collections of documents in national statistical agencies the chance to rise to the level of a special library of more than local significance.

To the statistical librarian, whenever he was charged to be responsible for the international exchange of publications, this direct contact by current correspondence with his colleagues in all European capitals has always meant an open window to the world. Though central statistical libraries were certainly not among the first to receive currently foreign literature from outside and so to gain some international momentum, they probably were the first to take up and to keep throughout the years immediate contact with their sister libraries. In fact, the librarians of several national statistical agencies frequently came to know each other personally just from this long lasting traditional cooperation and they learned how to draw wisely from such sources of information material offered to their national statistical office from all countries.

In some cases, a certain distribution of work in accordance with the prevailing official interests can be observed. In the German speaking countries for instance, Austria and Bavaria traditionally cultivate exchange relations with Eastern Europe, Switzerland has strong connections with France and Italy, while Berlin used to dominate in the exchange of publications with all Northern nations. As we all know, the fact that the forum for an international exchange of statistical publications has tenfold multiplied since, is to a large extent compensated by the many unfortunate difficulties to practise today an equally continuous contact of that kind, whether inside or outside Europe. But even so, wherever possible, national statistical libraries in Europe

stick to their old privilege of direct correspondence and direct exchange, by which still 60 to 70 % of their average annual accessions are obtained.

b) The first inventories:

The great initiator in statistical theory and organization Adolphe Quetelet, President for thirty years of the Belgian Commission Centrale de Statistique has published in the Bulletins of this Commission what can be called the first catalogue of a central statistical library, edited and supplemented by the Commission's secretary Xavier Heuschling, Director of the national statistical administration, Brussels 1853. Further accession lists ranged among the periodical publications of the Belgian statistical administration, proving clearly the growing preponderance of foreign official statistics.

At the same time the old Swedish "Tabellkommissionen" was changed into a Central Bureau of Statistics and presented as annex to the pertinent Parliamentary report a small catalogue of the Commission's library, printed in 1855 and containing 1.500 volumes of foreign official statistical publications, while Swedish literature is not mentioned. The Director of the new Swedish statistical office accentuated this preference of foreign statistical literature as absolutely necessary, a preference which still shows in the library's long rows of foreign statistical series down to 1800 in a rare completeness and in precious bindings, comparable to those "Danmarks Statistik" in Copenhagen keeps in such great esteem as the finest looking part of its present peaceful library.

Perhaps as a by-product of an otherwise ineffective resolution passed at the International Statistical Congress in Florence 1867, to collect all available data concerning Europe's principal libraries, cataloguing activities eventually started in most central statistical libraries. As only few statistical offices at that time could afford a librarian of their own, the assistance of librarians delegated from National or University libraries was needed for some years. Card catalogues were introduced in most statistical libraries at a very early date, as they fell into the specific statistical working pattern. Usually, the library entries were announced in the general statistics periodical. A number of comprehensive catalogues could be published separately, showing an average of 50.000 titles in economics and statistics (applied and theoretical), apart from a few hundred periodicals and sometimes considerable map collections.

The Catalogue of the Board of Trade Library, printed in 1866, and the "Katalog der Bibliothek des Kgl. Statistischen Büros zu Berlin", edited in two volumes in 1874 and 1879 under the direction of the German statistician Erich Engel, the "Fortegnelse over det statistiske bureau's bogsamling", Copenhagen 1880, the title list of the library and map collection of the Royal Hungarian Statistical Office 1867-1884, published by Imre Findura, and the first catalogue of the Library of the Royal Statistical Society, edited in 1884 and indexed in 1886, should be mentioned here.

These early printed catalogues show that the various series of statistical publications were usually arranged following a simple geographic principle of classification, similar to the one still valid as shelving order for instance in Scandinavia and in Spain. But the part of the catalogue listing the individual items by subject groups also shows, that - statistical societies excepted - at that time neither the authorities responsible for accession politics, nor the librarians charged with cataloguing were yet sufficiently aware of the fundamental difference between a universal and a special library and sometimes even less conscious of the specific considerations needed to let emerge from a more or less hazardous compilation of printed documents a useful statistical library.

Apparently, the leading official statisticians, greatly pleased by the flourishing exchange business, did not always care to notice what sort of publications they received in turn. And some of them seem to have handled the library budget in a rather discretionary way, following their individual literary preferences.

The librarians, on the other hand, were by their training accustomed to do their work using the scientific categories, as they were applied, by European universities in regard of the world of learning. It is understandable that they did not hesitate to apply the traditional classification of the whole range of human sciences to the holdings of the statistical library they had to catalogue and also had no misgivings to support the library's development towards a more comprehensive, sometimes almost universal character.

I am sorry that I can prove this by German examples only which I could study in detail. But by taking into consideration the titles listed and the subject classification still used in the most recent library catalogues of the Spanish Statistical Institute (Instituto Nacional de Estadística: Catálogo de la Biblioteca, Madrid, 1952 and 1966) I feel that the German examples can stand also for other catalogues of central statistical libraries in Europe during the 19th century.

The subject classification of the 1874 library catalogue of the former Prussian Bureau of Statistics presents 15 groups, starting with philosophy and theology, placing history next to national economics which take up just as many pages as jurisprudence and political sciences, followed by the groups of linguistics, fine arts and architecture. General statistics are mentioned in the headings of a single group, bundled together with geography, ethnography and demography. But nevertheless, the whole group does not even claim one tenth of the volume. Applied statistics keep hiding between the items listed in the subdivisions in a rather unfortunate alphabetical order, where by means of different print authors' names stand out much more than titles of official publications.

There are other catalogues, listing titles in alphabetical or geographical order only. It has to be assumed however, that alphabetical and geographical classification principles, which were also, though rather aptly, combined in the 1884 catalogue of the Royal Statistical Society, London, must have been, at that time, even to statisticians, not only the simplest but also the safest way to handle a new category of literature, arising to a considerable extent around a rapidly developing instrument of administration.

c) <u>The acceleration problem:</u>

The spreading of official statistical activity leading to a general awareness and need of statistical publications on all levels of administration, soon passed the limits of the traditional exchange of publications between government bodies.

Stockholm, Budapest and Vienna place some emphasis on the assertion that their central statistical libraries were around 1890 among the biggest governmental libraries of their country. National statistical commissions operating as official intermediaries between the various statistical

services of a government for a certain period, augmented further the stocks of the central statistical library by adding their own collections of publications on statistical methods and organization.

European capitals and major cities like Amsterdam, Basle, Frankfort, Cracow, Milano, Prague and Strasbourg also got their share in the rising flood of statistical publication activity. Several of them presented at the turn of the century printed library catalogues of their municipal statistical offices, remarkable by the percentage of foreign statistics.

It may be taken for granted that in 1900 Berlin alone lodged three major statistical libraries: the youngest belonging to the Statistisches Reichsamt, founded in 1872 (50.000 items), another, established at the Statistisches Bureau der Stadt Berlin (15.000 items) and the oldest one belonging to the Kgl. Preussisches Statistisches Bureau (120.000 items).

The fascination due to the number and growth rate of these libraries, so much in demand at their time, was apparent and the imminent danger of overcharging such dependent libraries and exhausting their limited capacities to a point, beyond which they became a source of nuisance and a shameful burden much more than a useful and efficient working tool was not yet perceived.

The average growth rate of a central statistical library at that time must be estimated at 2.000 bibliographical units per annum, a growth rate which accelerated during the 20th century in some cases to 8.000 and even to 10.000 units.

The overflowing into general literature, indicated already in some of the first inventories of central statistical libraries, came to be a fatal factor in the further course of events. Because around 1900 non-governmental libraries for social sciences well fixed financially began to establish themselves in addition to the few well reputed older ones all over Europe, thus taking sufficiently charge of this field of humanities and arriving at a standard, quickly regained after both World Wars, which the modestly equipped and often inadequately staffed governmental statistical libraries could never hope to attain and in fact were not supposed to attain.

The main reasons for the growth acceleration experienced by all librarie in our times are well known; the tremendous augmentation of publication activity in general, aggravated by the dumbfounding multiplication of periodicals. The central statistical libraries were most exposed to this development, as official statistical activity began to reach modern standards in accordance with rising governmental demands for a greater amount of economic, social and demographic facts and figures. This meant that the statistical library, earlier than most other kinds of libraries, became and still is today, mainly a periodicals' library which is known to grow much faster than libraries where periodicals and monographs are more evenly balanced. The scope of non-statistical periodical literature entering a statistical library, because it is needed for some current specific information of statisticians is surprising, the number of titles usually tenfold as high as that of statistical periodicals. The only statistical library which escaped till today this factor of growth acceleration is the one belonging to the Eidgenössisches Statistisches Amt, housed in the same building in Bern as the Schweizerische Landesbibliothek, the latter taking care of the periodicals also needed by the statistical library.

Another part of the statistical libraries' growth acceleration is due to the fact that almost all publications important to a great number of statisticians who have to work at them simultaneously, have to be available in several copies and often cannot be eliminated as duplicates before some time has elapsed. The amount of duplicates even for the more recent editions being a special calamity with all central statistical libraries in Europe, one should in fact ventilate the possibility of equipping the central statistical agencies, which have to a large extent been newly established in developing countries with a reasonable amount of well selected duplicates and thus giving a starting help for the creation of many new central statistical libraries serving as useful working tools to the statisticians overseas. The answer to this suggestion will have to be given by the governments concerned.

At this point, I should like to mention gratefully that during the first decade of its establishment from zero, the library of Statistisches Bundesamt in Wiesbaden received 95 % of the incoming official statistics published before 1946, including those of the Statistisches Reichsamt, as duplicates from sister libraries in Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland,

France, Hungary, Canada and Iceland as well as from the U.N. Geneva Library. Without these generous combined efforts it would have been impossible to re-establish so quickly a complete collection of all the series issued by Statistisches Reichsamt, desparately needed at that time to continue statistical activity in the newly created Federal Statistical Office in Wiesbaden.

d) A range of countermeasures:

Because of the long rows of documents from the early times of their official statistical activity the British had been the first to get alarmed and to take steps accordingly.

In 1873 for instance, just a few years after the issue of its catalogue, the Main Library of the Board of Trade was felt to have "grown too large for the requirements of the Department, and a suggestion for the retention of a small departmental library and the dispersal and throwing open of the remainder to all government departments led to the removal of the "Old Library", consisting of a valuable series of economic works and pamphlets, to the Foreign Office". The post of Librarian was abolished for the next twenty years. In 1908 the library had not only regained but surpassed its former size and the need to move to smaller premises in 1938/39 led to a second dispersal. A large collection of rare pamphlets on economics went to the British Museum, while the most recent literature only and the series of Parliamentary papers were retained.

Too ambitious accession politics, pursued in spite of sadly lacking quarters and staff, desirous to compete with more universal libraries, while unable to render at the same time sufficient internal services were given as the main reason when in 1930 the library of the then Preussisches Statistisches Landesamt was dissolved. With its 250.000 volumes it had by far outgrown all proportions. Two thirds of its holdings were taken over by the Preussische Staatsbibliothek and the rest, consisting of the more recent portion of statistical publications, by the library of the Statistisches Reichsamt some years later, after the Preussisches Landesamt had ceased to exist.

But the temporary striving for a universal character was by no means the only reason why central statistical libraries expanded at such a speedy rate, though their voluminous map collections gradually diminished when national geographical, geological and meteorological institutes were founded.

Duplication resulting from similar holdings and equal collections in the immediate neighbourhood is avoided now by a very successful cooperation developing in Scandinavia between the various economic and the central statistical libraries. In Norway for instance, the libraries of Statistisk Sentralbyrå, of the Nobel Institute, of Utenriksdepartment and of Storting (Parliament) formed after the last World War the so-called SNUS group and since 1951 have jointly published an annual accession list of foreign literature for the benefit of all Oslo libraries and their users. But at an earlier date regional compilation of duplicates was at the bottom of the considerations which led to the partial destruction of a remarkable statistical library in 1925. At that time there existed in Hamburg the rich and renowned Commerzbibliothek, the Library of the Hamburgisches Weltwirtschaftsarchiv, and the old library of the Handelsstatistisches Amt. Aware of such distinguished neighbourhood, the Hamburgisches Statistisches Landesamt suffering permanently under lamentable housing conditions sent almost 50.000 old volumes of foreign statistics to the paper mill.

The latest acceleration factor in the accessions of central statistical libraries is due to the recently spreading tendency in the official statistical publication system to split up the more comprehensive series of old into a multitude of different series, preferably one series for each single branch of official statistics with a periodicity ranging from daily to annual issues, and from advance - to preliminary - to intermediate - and to final reports. All these changes are supposed to speed up the publication of single results and are intended for the benefit of the various interested government bodies, but they also contribute considerably to the rise of the respective library's accession figures and are the cause of perplexity even to many a statistical librarian. The somewhat arbitrary solution the Irish Statistical Office has found for this problem, to destroy statistical periodicals published at shorter intervals as soon as the corresponding statistical yearbook has entered the library is not feasible for all of her sister libraries in view of the fact that the individual issues of the same periodical may differ in content.

The exchange of publications between central statistical libraries did not decrease, as one would have expected, when the publication activity of the various newly founded international organizations turned to official international statistics. On the contrary, these new and extremely important partners contributed much to a further stimulation of international publication exchange, because as much as these organizations were in need of all kinds of national data to make them internationally comparable, their own adjusted statistics did not and could not replace the original national data.

The Board of Trade Statistics Library, founded in 1834, was broken up in 1950 - 1952. "Many thousands of volumes of statistical publications of foreign countries from 1800 to 1919, and of Commonwealth countries to 1929 were transferred to the British Museum", leaving just the current statistical material on economics to form the Statistics Library, which nevertheless reports in 1968 holdings of 80.000 volumes including 3.000 current serial titles. It has been arranged with the British Museum that all stocks older than twenty years will be currently transferred to the State Paper Room.

And something like this must have happened at one time or another to the London Library of the Registrar General, whose office had been established in 1837 to conduct population censuses and render currently vital statistics reports. Because, if this library contains material even from foreign countries concerning all branches of demography, it would be likely to possess much more than the 16.000 volumes the "Guide to Government Department Libraries" mentions in its 1968 edition.

The repeated mentioning of the special trouble the older parts give to central statistical libraries as they were in such rare demand and did take up such a lot of shelving space, is perhaps characteristic of this specific kind of libraries and nowhere else to be found as a problem to that extent. Because it cannot rightly be said that old statistical material is outdated, on the contrary it may be of extreme value to the world of learning, but this argument cannot be regarded as sufficient by governmental statistical libraries which are confronted with the simple alternative to suffocate or to discard. For them it is the decisive argument that this old material is of no considerable interest to the staff of their own statistical office. On the other hand, after the Second World War, German authorities had great difficulties in locating and listing in the libraries of West Germany all publications the former Statistisches Reichsamt had issued in its seventy years of existence, because without them it proved to be impossible to draw up a complete statistical inventory in post war economics.

Once in a while, providence seems to intervene in favor of all parties concerned.

After the Second World War, the library of the Statistisches Reichsamt, which had survived in its old quarters in Berlin, was reduced from 220.000 to 10.000 volumes, the bulk being transferred to the newly founded Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung in another part of the city. The library of the Staatliche Zentralverwaltung für Statistik in Berlin had the difficulty, but also the chance, to start a modern statistical library, just as, at the same time, the library of the Statistisches Bundesamt in Wiesbaden.

The latter was greatly helped to complete its collection of foreign periodicals by the generosity of the Institut International de Statistique whose Permanent Office, residing within the quarters of the Dutch Central Bureau for Statistics (CBS) in The Hague, dedicated in 1953 part of its own valuable library to the Statistisches Bundesamt in Wiesbaden, pointing out that the Permanent Office of the Institute would be satisfied to have the Dutch Central statistical library at its disposal. This is the more remarkable, as the Statutes adopted for the Permanent Office, in 1913 name as the first of the four objectives, to be attained: "de réunir, d'examiner et de conserver dans sa bibliothèques et ses archives, les documents statistiques des différents Etats et des Offices internationaux". This objective was now taken over by the CBS Library, which also serves as depository library for several other statistical institutions. The application of a very strict selection principle to all other accessions is needed to keep this library, which has to be regarded as one of the finest central statistical libraries in Europe, from overcrowding.

In Belgium the Office Central de Statistique left in 1940 the Ministry of the Interior and was placed under the custody of the Ministry of Economics. At this time, its rich statistical library got completely annexed by the new custodian. Though separated from now on from the national statistical institute it was named "Bibliothèque Fonds Quetelet" in honour of its glorious past. This library with its unique international statistical nucleus, published in seven volumes between 1902 and 1911, holds now half a million books and 4.800 periodicals, figures which can only be compared to those of the Central Statistical Office in Moscow, refounded in 1918.

The statistical librarian, confronted with the natural limits a government body has to impose on the facilities of its library and with the continuing acceleration in growth of stocks and in users' demands will

feel inclined to envy the Royal Statistical Society London for the considerations given to her library, not wishing to place it outside its precincts like the Société Statistique de Paris, presently housing its library with the Faculté du Droit. After the preface to the 1908 edition of the Society's catalogue had pointed out that it had taken two years of careful examination to eliminate from the large additions of the past twenty years all those "which do not come strictly within the scope of the Society", these eliminations had to be repeated. By taking into consideration the results of a recent users' survey, the Society hopes to find a formula how to keep the "Select Library" on statistical theory and methods up to date without passing the limit of 50.000 books and pamphlets and without admitting any substantial loss in its unique value.

To sum up the various illustrations quoted above, there seem to remain in fact several steps one can take to cope effectively with the growth acceleration in a conventional central statistical library:

1) to develop a coordinated accession scheme of regional if not national scope in permanent cooperation with other statistical libraries and in contact with those of economic and social sciences,

2) to eliminate all duplicates and avoid any further incorporation of duplicates,

3) to stream-line the whole library by careful weeding and selection to obtain

   a) an exclusively statistical character, drawing the line along literature evaluating official statistics

   b) only statistical holdings absolutely necessary for the library of a national statistical agency, that is: a complete collection of the nation's own statistics, the main series of official statistical publications of other nations, and of international organizations,

4) to discard all statistical publications issued before 1920 - the statistical offices own publications excepted -, but preferably only in case a national library or a library with a national reputation for its collections on economic and social sciences would be prepared to take over,

5) to arrange with the library mentioned under 4) gliding terms of transfer for all statistical publications issued twenty years ago.

6. **Bibliographical activities:**

Publication of library catalogues apparently came out of use with the First World War so that the 1923 edition issued by the Czechoslovakian State Statistical Office, which was a model library inventory, looks like a late but excellent fruit. Most central statistical libraries at that time were either, like that of Poland and Russia, still too much in the process of development or had already grown far beyond the means a government body is usually willing to sacrifice for the publication of its library catalogue. Lists of selected accessions periodically prepared by the library in printed form or reproduced were substituted for the printed catalogue.

The time had come to concentrate upon a detailed bibliographical evaluation of the increasing library accessions.

Some examples of the bibliographical activity central statistical libraries developed are given in the annex to this paper. If they had to be classified according to the range of subjects they endeavoured to cover, one would have to begin with the "Bibliographie der Sozialwissenschaften", started in Berlin by the short-lived "Internationales Institut für Sozialbibliographie" in 1905 and taken over twenty years later by the library of the Statistisches Reichsamt. This monthly was supposed to be an international bibliography of books and periodicals on political, social and economic sciences. The whole field was divided into 13 subject groups, statistics (theory and methods of application) being placed as a separate group between finance and demography, while applied statistics and their published results were considered only as a formal category, like sociology for instance, and attached to the subject group towards which their application was directed. In a similar way the Universal Decimal Classification adds applied statistics as an annex to the fundamental code numbers.

The titles cited were selected not without regard to the corresponding bibliographical publications issued by several international organizations in Europe. But from the very beginning the emphasis was of course German literature. Among the foreign literature cited, French and English publications were prevailing. But even so the frame originally drawn proved to be too wide in the long run. More than 60,000 titles had to be selected every year and the annual authors' and subject index was prepared by a surprisingly small number of staff. Though kept with considerable effort till 1943, the bibliography had changed from international social sciences to German politics.

While central statistical libraries in Europe by their extensive network of official publication exchange were extremely successful in developing a sort of regional cataloguing scheme sufficiently adapted to their big holdings in official documents (the so-called corporative authors' catalogue), an adequate subject cataloguing scheme was much more difficult to prepare. And there, even nowadays, each central statistical library is on its own as for its tripartite funds: statistics, economics and administration no generally acceptable solution could yet be found. The annual "Schweizerische Bibliographie für Statistik und Volkswirtschaft", which has been compiled from Swiss books and articles by the librarian of the Eidgenössisches Statistisches Amt in Bern since 1937, uses UDC for its 4,000 titles, but recently had to add a special subject index to the authors' index to facilitate bibliographical research.

Since 1958, the Hungarian Central Statistical Office's library has been issuing, in cooperation with the library of the Institute of Economics at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences an annual bibliography containing a selection of about 700 titles of Hungarian books and articles on economics and statistics, classified under 17 subject headings which seem to be adequately adapted to the material thus covered.

A wide range of subjects combined with a coverage of several European nations can be claimed since 1934 by the renowned monthly French abstract "Documentation Economique". Since 1951, when the library of INSEE joined the board of editors after having developed for the recataloguing of its own funds a special "Plan de classification décimale de la documentation statistique et économique ", the abstract has applied this classification scheme which later was also adopted by the OECD Library with certain modifications relating mainly to the sectors of demography and planning. The system is in fact a very efficient one if applied to the stocks of a French economic library.

An exclusively statistical bibliography on an international scale was started in 1934 by the International Statistical Institute with the assistance of the librarian of the Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics. In thirty years the quarterly "Review" of the Institute dedicated an annual average of 90 pages to a bilingual bibliography of books and articles drawn from 120 mostly European journals and selected in view of their importance for the development of statistical methods.

The classification system developed and unfolded itself in accordanee with the progress statistics made as a special science. While "statistical theory" originally was given only one of 15 chapters, occupying one fifth of the "International Statistical Bibliography" in 1935, it came to take up half of the bibliographical pages in 1960, thus reducing drastically the contents of the 14 chapters dedicated to applied statistics.

In 1963, after thorough discussions between statistical scholars and statistical librarians in Canada and the Netherlands, ISI presented a modified scheme of dual classification (statistical theory, applied statistics), which still may serve as a model scheme for the subject catalogue in libraries of statistical institutes.

So it was rather a shock to most statistical libraries, when in 1964 the International Statistical Bibliography was completely abandoned as outdated, the more so as many libraries had either changed this bibliography into a supplementary statistical catalogue of high standard or inserted its items into their own catalogues. The replacing of this bibliography by "Statistical Theory and Method Abstracts", published on a quarterly basis since 1959 and using the Buckland scheme for the classification of international literature in mathematical statistics, just meant for the statistical librarian to start another special catalogue because the size of the English abstract cards diverges considerably from the international norm. The difference in coverage, subjects and classification between the to subsequent international statistical bibliographies is striking. Nothing shows better the course statistics have taken through the years. Starting as a mere accounting system for administrative purposes, then developing gradually into an auxiliary science by the invention of elaborate methods of estimation and forecast, as for instance the various sampling techniques, they are nowadays commonly understood as a mathematical discipline concerned with the study of masses of numerical data of any kind, accompanied by the enormous technical progress in processing them.

After the abolishment of the International Statistical Bibliography, national statistical agencies engaging in applied statistics only were by no means satisfied with the exclusively scholarly turn in ISI's bibliographical activities and therefore had to intensify their own bibliographical activity as far as possible.

Prepared by the library of the Bavarian Statistical Office, which serves traditionally as a depository library for the Deutsche Statistische Gesellschaft, an annex to the society's quarterly "Allgemeines Statistisches Archiv" has been published since 1949 which contains a roughly classified "Bibliographie der methodisch-statistischen Literatur des In- und Auslandes".

International bibliographies on special statistical subjects are now prepared mostly by international organizations: by the Statistical Office of the United Nations, by UN specialized agencies, by UN Economic Commissions and their respective libraries. The lively bibliographical activity of the OECD library in the statistical sector deserves to be mentioned here because it is stimulated by the former INSEE librarian, Mlle R. Cormier, author of INSEE's above mentioned classification scheme and of the recently published international documentation guide: "Les sources des statistiques actuelles" (Paris 1969).

On the national level, the statistical librarians and their staff in Sweden and Norway, in Hungary and Poland are known to be very strong in the field of historical and demographic statistics. Thanks to their efforts, their agencies could issue for the centenary a complete list of titles of all their national statistical publications over a period of one hundred years.

It has been repeatedly stressed that no useful bibliographical work can be done without close cooperation between librarians and statisticians. Much more and much better statistical bibliographies would result from such a cooperation in Europe, especially in view of the statistical bibliographies prepared in team-work between the US Library of Congress and the Bureau of the Census concerning, among other topics, "National censuses and vital statistics in Europe 1918-1948". To achieve such a cooperation everywhere in Europe, much remains to be done. The recent edition of "Recommended Basic Statistical Sources for Community Use" by the Joint Working Party of librarians and economic statisticians in London is a modest but hopeful beginning. Meanwhile, and particularly in view of the period of rapid transformation statistical institutions are presently undergoing, only librarians with a statistical training will have a chance to cope with the future tasks central statistical libraries are facing.

7. <u>The documentation centre:</u>

This brings us to the last subject to be discussed in this paper: What will the future statistical library be like and what services will it have to render?

In 1957, the Spanish statistician Serrano Sanchez contributed to the centenary publication of Spanish official statistics (Boletin de Estadística 1957, suppl. 9) an article in which he tried to determine by applying the methods of linear programming, the average costs and the average output of a statistical library. The results were somewhat vague, but seem to be comparable to those the Royal Statistical Society obtained by its last survey concerning the use of its library. There is no doubt that a library cannot be handled exactly in the same way as a profit making enterprise. But as has been shown by the publication of H. Kortzfleisch "Rationalisierun in wissenschaftlichen Bibliotheken" (Bonn, 1970), librarians are very conscious of the necessity to rationalize.

Like all governmental libraries, a central statistical library is exposed to waste, and this trend to waste can rise quickly to fatal hights in a central statistical library if it coincides with a lack of library adaptation to the continuous change in official statistical activities and processing techniques.

Statistical work, its fields and demands have been in constant transformation for many years already, and this stage of transition is felt very much by some statistical librarians. They see the rising flood of statistical publications, which are about to change into bound computer-printed tabulations. The tumbling walls of overloaded dusty shelves are behind them. If also unsufficiently staffed for documentation and information services, they will be tempted to resign in view of the towering demands they can no longer cope with. I have visited many of the central statistical libraries mentioned in this paper. Most of them have to fight against the same difficulties, but they know that resignation will be answered immediately by administrative interference which is likely to worsen the situation instead of bettering it.

Rationalization will be needed both for the library's <u>stocks</u> and the library's <u>services</u>.

a) Various possibilities to reduce the stocks of a central statistical library have already been mentioned. They can be used step by step to achieve a gradual reduction. There is in fact, even for the conventional statistical library, a further but rather radical solution in the background, that is to extinguish itself altogether and to become a mere transitional registration and documentation service.

In Belgium, the Institut National de Statistique for instance, after having delivered its big library of old to the Ministry of Economics, now pursues the following course: accession by purchase is coordinated with the Bibliothèque Fonds Quetelet. Books and periodicals entering the statistical institute by exchange agreement are first handled by a secretary and eventually, depending the actual interests of the institute, evaluated and then sent to the Fonds Quetelet for library processing, shelving and further library treatment. The Institut National de Statistique keeps just a small reference library, mostly to be found on the desks of its staff where the books stay as long as they are needed.

Statistical publications entering the Office of the Conference of European Statisticians within the UN Economic Commission for Europe in Geneva or the Statistical Office of the European Communities in Luxembourg are receiving a treatment not very different from the one explained above, because neither of them keeps a statistical library of its own. - It has to be mentioned, however, that at the respective international collecting points (UN Geneva Library, European Communities Central Library Luxembourg and Brussels) these statistical publications which were evaluated in advance serve as additional copies only, because all international libraries receive their share of official statistical publications by separate exchange arrangements directly from the national statistical agencies.

The Belgian example seems to be the most convenient solution, provided that such a central collecting point in the immediate neighbourhood of each central statistical office exists, and this will work as long as its capacities will last. In all other cases one would have to consider to what extent the holdings of the central statistical library could be replaced by microfilms or magnetic tapes. Mere statistical data collections would probably be the first kind of literature to be reduced by such a procedure.

b) In this way, and one can imagine that part of all future accessions will also consist of microfilms and magnetic tapes, the documentation and information services of the said statistical library will of course have to be changed accordingly.

Much has been written and achieved with regard to mechanization in the field of documentation. I should simply like to point out here that statistical librarians have to watch rather closely the further development within the library world as well as within their own statistical agency to get involved into the process exactly at the right moment. Otherwise it may happen that, though belonging to a government body most advanced in electronic data processing techniques, they will be the last libraries to participate in the general progress. It will anyway take some time for them to convince their office and the staff responsible for electronic data processing that the very character of library services does not admit a computerized treatment limited only to the occasional intervals between the processing of two censuses.

Speedy and direct information of the statistical staff members about the incoming statistical documents is the orucial point of the services central statistical libraries have to render. The introduction of the above reversed course of processing statistical literature in Belgium and in most international organizations - evaluation by statisticians first, documentation by library last - proves this sufficiently.

The conventional information media: newspaper clipping service, circulation of periodicals, edition of monthly accession lists, of weekly abstracts from periodicals are all far from reaching the goal. The lavish use statistical libraries make of photocopying for rapid and precise communication to statistical staff members of the latest documents entering the library, was a great leap foreward. But how to speed up the selection and communication process of bibliographical information further, especially for statisticians concerned with price movements or stocks exchanges who depend completely the rapidity of such a data transfer, is one of the questions which still have to be answered.